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THE EDUCATION of a LEGISLATOR.

By

JOHN DAVIDSON. M. A., Edin.

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"Neither is it to be passed over in silence that this "dedicating of colleges and societies only to the use of professory "learning hath not only been an enemy to the growth of sciences, "but hath redounded likewise to the prejudice of states and govern- "ments: for hence it commonly falls out that princes, when they "would make choice of ministers fit for affairs of state, find "about them such a marveillous solitude of able men: because there "is no education collegiate designed to this end, where such as are "framed and fitted by nature thereto might give themselves chiefly "to histories, modern languages, books and discources of policy, "that so they might come more able and better furnished to the "service of the State". Advancement of Learning. Bk. I.

This protest has availed nothing. As little, or if it be possible, even less is done in the present age to promote the systematic training of our legislators. We have been content to rely upon chance to supply us with efficient legislators, and parliamentary records show that our confidence has not been displaced. We at any rate find no such 'marvellous solitude of able men'. The tradition of our public service is so honorable that we are able to select from a large number of aspirants and since the ablest are inevitably drawn into public life we do not require to trouble ourselves much. Nor have we troubled ourselves. Neither in schools nor

in colleges, nor yet in 'books and discourses of policy' has any serious attempt been made to teach the art of exercising political functions. Political speculation has been of little service, because the tendency of political science to exalt primary elements which, just because they are primary elements need not enter into the calculations of a legislator,- has rendered the study barren for immediate practical purposes. That strenuous affectation of worldly wisdom which besets the lecture room or the scholastic denunciation of scholasticism in politics has served but indifferently to correct this tendency to abstraction.

This absence of deliberate academic training for public life has not been felt to be an evil, because, in a measure, all men are trained for public life by daily mixing among their fellows and because most of the statesmen, who have been prominent in our national history, have received from their earliest childhood a most careful deliberate training for public life, in addition to the unconscious tradition of public service in which they were brought up. We live in the most exclusively political society the world has ever seen. Public service has for centuries been the most honorable calling, and, owing to our social conditions, the only calling open to the most powerful class in the community. The day of

the hereditary legislator is almost passed. They were mostly grave honourable men, only occasionally brilliant, but always useful. They had nothing of the splendour of crusaders, but their training and political instinct enabled them to achieve much. Now that their day is passed we must acknowledge the splendid tradition of public service we have received from them. They fixed a standard below which we may not fall without disgrace.

As it is a thankless task to suggest a course of training for a legislator in Utopia we must first discover what a legislator is, according to the best received notions of English parties.

Since the evolution of that anomalous body, the Cabinet, there has been a steady tendency towards centralisation within the house of commons. The Cabinet is coming to be the sole register and executor of the decisions of the House. Without any explicit recognition,- there is nothing, almost, explicit in the English Constitution- the initiative has practically devolved upon this Committee. Bit by bit the initiative of the private Member has been curtailed until now even the private Members nights are unblushingly appropriated on the slightest pressure of public business. Theoretically the initiative remains to the private Member, and if he is exceptionally lucky in the ballot and in his measures, he may like the late Mr. Bradlaugh contrive to have his name writ large in

the Statute Book, but practically we may say that a legislator is a Minister. The House of Commons is, in fact, what the American College of Electors is in theory, a representative body of electors, which has the further function of discussing and controlling the legislators by the power of dismissal. But, since every Member whom age has not disheartened nor experience of hope deferred, disillusioned, aims to sit on the front bench, this actual limitation does not seriously affect the problem of the Essay. So in studying the characteristics of a Cabinet Minister we may, to use Plato's Metaphor, study the ideal of a legislator 'in large letters'.

It is not worth the while to deduce the character of the ideal legislator from any abstract theory of the best government. It would be easy to re-construct the World on a better plan, but on the whole it is more profitable to accept the World as it is and find the qualities which constitute statesmanship in the practice of the statesmen, who have guided the fortunes of the country. None of them were immaculate: all of them were human: but we may with good reason systematise the principles on which they governed and the dispositions of mind they brought to bear on the problems of government.

A legislator is the incarnation of the principle of com-

promise. We have all a professed regard for the principle of compromise, in theory at least. Even the most bigotted fanatic will assent to counsels of moderation in the abstract, but in his heart of hearts he dispises compromise and treats it as the absolute negation of principle. Most men are fanatics on some question or other (if it be only conventionality) and practically compromise has come to mean dishonest time-serving. Compromise however is not trimming between good and evil, because in politics no good is all good, no evil hopelessly evil. The moral reproach of compromise is due to a false conception of the nature of political truth. Every common-place moralist will tell you scornfully that truth is not a question of majorities. He is right, but he is guilty of an atrocious non sequitur when he applies his precious truism to politics. Truth is not a question of majorities, but every practical truth must aim at universal recognition. The majority is only evidence, that one fragment of the truth has become, or is becoming, true for practice. There is no such thing as a political truth, which cannot be realised in practice, for, we cannot permit a divorce between theory and practice. A theory which cannot be reduced to practice, an ideal which cannot be realised, is of no value whatsoever. The orthodox manner of stating the Free Trade argument is, just now, that in theory Protection is the better plan, but that it

wont work in practice. As if any theory which wont work fulfils the essential conditions of a theory! A political truth remains abstract and one-sided, until it manages to convert a majority. In this process it will lose much of its angularity, and accommodation implies a certain apparent degradation and falling away from the truth. This is the reason why no man forces an unwelcome measure upon a nation and the reason why no statesman will try. "Laws they "are not which public arbitration hath not made so": (Hooker cit. by Prof Lorimer). A great deal of the energy of every public man is consumed in fruitless attempts to vindicate his consistency. Politics would be very much more sincere and fruitful if a nation would only realise that consistency is the last virtue it should demand in a legislator. Popular acceptance is one condition always before the mind of a legislator, when he brings forward a new measure. He may be mistaken but this is evidence only that he is fallible. He is prepared to make a certain amount of timely concession and modification of details to secure the easy passage of his measure. Some of these concessions may be forced from him reluctantly and against his better judgment, but so long as he gains his main contention he will justify his concessions on the ground that popular acceptance is better than logical perfection. This may seem

to border on political immorality, but we find such an uncompromising idealist as Mazzini putting forward popular acceptance as the canon of political judgment. 'If united Italy' he says in effect, 'should declare in favour of a monarchy, and against a republic, we, of young Italy, will bow to the national will, while reserving to ourselves our republican apostolate.' Even when the verdict of the country has gone against a measure the government might remain in office and carry out what the constituencies had demanded: or, if the verdict were merely negative, drop the obnoxious measure and proceed with other measures. But few statesmen can carry the art of accommodation to such an heroic pitch. A measure generally embodies a principle, of the truth of which, that is, of the ultimate acceptance of which by the nation, the statesman is so convinced that he would rather retire from office than continue to serve those who had lost confidence in his judgment. This is the only Country where Her Majesty's Opposition is an integral part of the Constitution. It is the practical embodiment of the political axiom that, until you have changed it, the national will remains the standard of political truth for the nation. A statesman goes into Opposition only that he may return to Office. If he have no hope of the ultimate success of his measure, so much the less Statesman he.

Theory must wait upon opportunity. We may recognize that a measure is inevitable and ultimately wise without being therefore obliged to enact it in toto at once. Legislation proceeds by small modifications, not by violent measures: a society under parliamentary government progresses by evolution, not by revolution.

Politics is an art- and a very difficult art- and we must take account of the limits of our material. Success in politics implies such concession as is necessary to the limits of the material. The wants and interests are complex and changing, and the function of a legislator is to interpret and give formal expression to these unformulated wants. He must recognise that the art of ruling a great people cannot be reduced to any formula: that there is a constant change in its necessities: that satisfying one demand is the means of creating another, or ought to be: and that his work is to do what most needs to be done regardless of any personal theory he may have as to what ought to be done. His is the art 'to come pat betwixt too early and too late',- to seize the right moment between doctrinaire rashness and revolution. A revolution is an indictment by a nation of those who have held rule over it. Every revolution is an attempt to gain recognition for a hitherto neglected element in the social synthesis and every revolution is

necessary because the rulers have ceased to be statesmen. When those who are in power prefer their own ease and comfort or the interests of their class to the welfare of the nation, and 'prop with the labour of a day, buildings irrevocably doomed to perish', rather than exert themselves to understand and remove the cause of the present discontent, they are precipitating a revolution which in the search of a new and truer authority will sweep them from their seats. Timely concession is not only politic,- it is politics. These constantly changing demands from the material with which a statesman has to deal and the real work of statesmanship consists in adjusting conflicting social interests, which are too powerful or too novel for the law, as existing, to control, so as to secure equal justice for all.

Every legislator has his specialties of course, and his, own aptitudes and feelings are part of the material with which he has to deal. When a statesman has gained the trust of the nation as the interpreter of their wants his ideas are likely to have a profound influence over the minds of the people, and thus a statesman has a very important function as an educator and leader of public opinion. It is not however as an authority or as an expert that a man succeeds in politics. It is very often in spite of his specialities. If a man is nothing but a specialist, he is by no

means fit for the conduct of affairs, and it is only because every man is, in some degree more than a specialist that we are not more alive to the dangers of specialisation in public life. A specialist has a function even within the House of Commons which has become a Chamber for discussion. He is listened to as one who speaks with authority, and is sure of a House, although he may not be reported in the newspapers. But as a specialist he has no claim to interfere with the management of affairs. A specialist is a man of one idea who forgets that men do not live in the light of pure reason.

The temptation comes at one time or other to every public man to become a man of one idea, in order to gain that increase of power which devotion to one idea brings. By this means there is a great concentration of energy, and if the idea be good and practicable a man may thus obtain more than his share of influence in shaping the course of events. To gain this power in present time,- to be a statesman and not a prophet- a man must retain complete control over his idea. The moment a man surrenders to an idea, he loses immediate influence. He becomes one of the elements of a national progress, which it is the function of the statesman to co-ordinate. He sees only a part of the case: while it is the mark of a statesman that he sees, or endeavours to see, the case from many points of view. It is a hard task laid upon a statesman that he is

great only as being the servant of all.

An ideal statesman is impersonal. All the conflicting interests, including his own ideal and opinions, must be placed in the scales, and the balance must be at once sensitive and true. There is a great and increasing pressure brought to bear upon a member to support local interests. Amid the clamour of petty interests we may forget that inasense the division of the country into definite constituencies is only a matter of convenience. Every member is a member for the whole country, and is bound to consider the interests of the nation first. On local questions we ought to defer to the opinions of the local majority, but on national questions local or class interests are not to be preferred before the clearly apprehended needs of the community. As things are however, only the impotence of an individual member in face of the blank indifference of his fellow members prevents the Statute book from being crowded with petty local measures. So long as the Member is considered only as the member for his constituency, so long that is as the consciousness of national unity remains only half developed, there will be misunderstanding in the interpretation of the duties of a Member of Parliament. There was an amusing instance of this misunderstanding in 1885 when it was objected that too many Scotch members were in the Cabinet, and because a Cabinet Minister cannot

promote local interests it was solemnly argued that Scotland was inadequately represented in Parliament.

Opportunism does not mean a virtual abdication of responsibility. The specific function of a Statesman is to act as a sort of Platonic Justice,- to weigh, to arrange, and to promote harmony. He should consider each of these local claims (for local interests must not be sacrificed unduly to a hasty conception of the national interest) and give to each of them its proper political value. It is his part to keep an open mind and to shun conventional ways of regarding things. What we want in him is not so much ideas, as capacity for dealing with ideas: and the larger part of this capacity is sympathy. Even in politics the basest motive is not always the real motive. When a statesman adopts the cant of insincerity his influence is as good as gone. He lives with the past when he begins to regard every enthusiast as one to be snubbed and sneered at.

In short,- a statesman must be an enthusiast without an enthusiasm. Few men can fill that formula. It is the most difficult thing in the world to maintain, a deep earnest enthusiasm for carrying out other peoples ideas. The besetting sin of public life is to regard the government of a mighty people as an exercise of low cunning. Politics is more than the tricks of politicians. A statesman must preserve, what Matthew Arnold finely styles, a sense of

the greatness of great affairs.

The ideal of a statesman is not easily realised by any man. The nobility of the function is not more apparent than the difficulty of performing it. It is not given to all men to be opportunist and honest. To be consistently inconsistent, to move with the times, not slower, not faster ("too swift arrives as tardy as too slow") seems almost a counsel of perfection in the form of a paradox. Nor is it an ideal to which men are attracted. To follow a middle course stirs no moral enthusiasm. We may respect such an one yet respect is but an indifferent substitute for devotion. Mr. Gladstone, in the latest catch, is the Grand Old Opportunist, and yet there probably never was a statesman who commanded so real a devotion from his followers for such a long period of years. He is an exception to all rules but in the present instance we can explain how moderation has aroused devotion. Mr. Gladstone has grown with the growth of political ideas. He has not accommodated himself to popular demands from an outside point of view, for his political development has proceeded side by side with the political development of the nation. His sympathies are instinctively those of the majority of the nation, so he comes upon his schemes not after an anxious consultation of the national pulse but in his own inner consciousness. Thus we can understand his sublime confidence

in his schemes and his curious inability to admit that he has changed.

Strictly speaking it is not a legislators duty to educate the people's wants or even to find out what they really are, but this is a narrower and more mechanical view of the political ideal than the facts warrant us in taking. The ideal of opportunism does not imply, that a statesman must always and only play the part of h the unjust judge in the parable, and legislate because of much asking. Frequently the most importunate askers are those who need least care. A legislator must judge and estimate the value of the demands made upon his attention, and on whatever standard he may have, it is not always the most clamant interests which should secure his attention. A nation whose legislators systematically yield to, and yielding encourage, the ever plausible demand for panem et circenses is already far on the down grade. The deeper and truer interests of the nation make little noise. Because these are national interests it is nobody's business to enforce them and the public is not easily aroused on questions which do not immediately and distinctly affect some portion. Here a leader's duty is to lead, for in our present stage these national sentiments are called forth only at rare intervals by national danger and disaster Yet these nobler sentiments are not dead, but sleeping, and it is

the mark of true statesmanship not to legislate in their disregard. Legislation must not be based on the assumption that these sentiments ought always to be visibly in action, but the statesman who does not allow for their influence is the sure architect of his country's ruin. A legislator must weigh all the interests of the nation before he legislates. The danger of a popular government is that the balance be over-sensitive and that a temporary necessity be erected into a binding precedent. Whatever may have been the case quarter of a century since, there is now no probability of what Mr. Morley calls a shrinking deference to the status quo. The risk is all the other way. There has been a profound and not altogether silent revolution going on in our politics. The working classes have awakened to a sense of their power and the danger is that for a time, at least, the pace may become too fast. The vague sullen discontent of the agricultural labourer may result in a series of extreme measures. It is true that most legislation is really class legislation, and that few measures can directly benefit more than a section of the community, but it is the duty of a statesman to see that in seeking to redress the grievances of one class he does not unduly restrain the opportunities of another class. In an age of democracy it is important to remember

Mazzini's protest, that the nation is not a caste. A legislator who deliberately treats any section of the community as outcast and unworthy of consideration has failed of his function. The important thing in a democracy is to see that it is really a democracy and not an inverted tyranny. The term democracy is altogether unfortunate, for it is inspired by the idea of struggle against privilege. To foster the conception of national unity is the most prominent part of the educational labour which should be undertaken by a statesman.

There is, no doubt, a practical danger in the half truth that small reforms are the enemies of great reforms, but the danger is a statutory warning against the sloth which folds its hands and says, "These things shall not happen in my time". "After me the deluge" is a virtual abdication of responsibility. Social tinkering is not legislation and to yield to the immediate pressure is folly in its scorn of consequence. The science and art of politics is a study of consequences. Legislation is always prospective, and, practically, every legislator does and must believe in progress. The meaning of the address which Mr. Balfour delivered in Glasgow last month has been generally mistaken. Mr. Balfour's

subtle criticism was directed not so much against the idea of progress,- that is a practical postulate,- as against every theory of progress and, perhaps less justifiably, against the supposition that theory has any influence on progress. But the hopeless optimism of the address was so nigh akin to pessimism that it is not wonderful that it was misunderstood by the man in the street. The trust in the future of the country and of the race, which Mr. Balfour displayed, can only be compared to the blind unreasoning trust which the citizens of the United States have in their national luck. We can, by no means in our power, determine what the future will be, he seems to say, although we can and must believe that it will be well with us. This optimism, based on a profound scepticism of theory and science, is as characteristic of his metaphysics as of his political philosophy, but it is an attitude which few could maintain. There is no necessary contradiction between a belief in the spontaneity of every great movement ("God alone strikes the hours of the world" says Mazzini, and Mazzini was not a political sceptic) and the recognition of political theory as a means of political progress. The constitutional disposition of the nation will correct and modify every theory before it is reduced to practice, but still, every legislative measure is

a political experiment, the translation of a theory into practice. It is true that we cannot see far into the future, and that what we do see we see distorted through the medium of our historical limitations. But by a legislator the possibility of national ruin cannot be practically contemplated, and for this very reason, against national ruin no foresight can guard. If the initiative of a nation be exhausted no stimulus of theory or of tradition will avail anything. Her mission is accomplished and nothing can avert her fall, but no one within her borders can recognise the inevitableness of decay. The very despair of her advisers is animated by the certainty of the future, although history shows that their assurance was vain. The legislator must believe in progress, for this belief supplies the ethical justification of opportunism.

There is, however, only too much ground for that distrust of the philosopher in politics which Mr. Balfour, in common with the average Englishman, exhibits. Apart from our national aversion for logical systems, political history shows us how often theories have paid us with words. Other nations have been blessed with system-monger reformers, and when all has been said we prefer our own constitution. The truth is, that to press to the mark of a logical perfection is to ignore the difference between theory and

practice. No man can produce a constitution out of his head unless he sums up in himself the whole life of the nation for which he legislates. To propound a system or complete theory of politics unless it be reached by systematic induction and research, is a piece of infinite arrogance. It assumes a final knowledge of all the complex and varying needs of the nation and these cannot be crushed into any formula. A properly working constitution must be full of logical contradictions each of which is valuable because it expresses a fragment of the practical truth.

It has been a true instinct that has made us distrust the theorist in politics. In our history all the great political ideas have come from below, and we should have to alter our nature before we could imitate the action of Paris Municipal Council in appointing a Professor of Labour. The working classes in this country have worked out their own economic salvation in independence, and often in defiance of the economic theorists. The strike policy was continued in spite of its obvious hardships and of the conclusive demonstration of its futility according to the Wages Fund Theory. Now the Wages Fund Theory is exploded or explained away, and so sober, cautious and conservative an economist as

Professor Nicholson admits the value of the policy to labour as a whole. If there is a tendency among the more advanced of the New Unionists to deprecate strikes it is because they conceive that the working classes have a much more efficient and, to the individual, much less cruel means of reaching their end, viz. by their votes. The great vivifying idea of co-operation, to take another instance, in its limited application to distribution came from below. It was never actively opposed by the economists, but they did their best to damn it with faint praise. The radically false plan of co-operative production has always been put forward by sentimental doctrinaires whose zeal and sympathy were better than their historical insight. Co-operation in its successful form is, in distribution, what division of labour is, in production.

By admitting the force of this truth we are not shut up to the assertion that any man is disqualified from estimating the views and aspirations of the crowd at their proper value for practical legislation, because he can take a wider and more comprehensive view. It is the glory of the statesman that he can recognise the practical truth wherever it is found. A legislator is not a theorist any more than he is a one-sided exponent of a movement. He is the judge - and the despair- of both. A politician, says

Burke, is a philosopher in action, and, as we have hinted, it is possible to be too doctrinaire in our rejection of doctrinairism. In spite of the tendency to exalt first principles, on account of which a philosopher is better outside of Parliament, a wise statesman is our nearest approximation to Plato's conception of a philosopher (or rather, to one of his conceptions) as συνοπτικος the man who sees things together. Plato's apparent paradox, that philosophers should be kings, seems to fail of the object most prominent in his mind, viz. the culture of the citizens, because all the thinking is done for them. We are hardly fair to Plato, however, when we treat his demand for a philosopher king as a demand for an individual. From the details of his scheme, for example the rotation of the governors, we can gather that he would have recognised his ideal ruler in Edward I or in Frederick the Great, not in Julien the Apostate or even in Marcus Aurelius. This is the first explicit demand that government should be based upon first principles. No Grecian city possessed more than the rudiments of a constitution, and that constitutional temper, which is the safeguard of modern democracy, had, even in Athens, little influence in moderating the violence of conflicting interests. For a modern state it would be a pardonable boast that philosophy is

king. In our own country there is no great need for a genius to work the constitution; under ordinary circumstances it is self-acting.

Every nation gets what leaders it deserves, and conversely, the truest test of a nation is the tone of its leaders. The nation which, in a crisis, can place its confidence in the virtuous stupidity of a Nicias is already marked for destruction. Energy has departed from its counsel and strength from its arm, and its initiative has passed to another. While the life of a nation flows full and free at a crisis we can always say,- "The hour has come "and the man". In a modern state, where the constitution is to a large extent self-acting, the test is not so sure, because the rarer and nobler qualities of a statesman are not often called into play: yet, within limits, we judge the nation by the ideals which its leaders profess. The reciprocal influence of leader upon people is sometimes more marked, but can hardly be so permanent. Mr. Bagshot says somewhere, in this connection, that most of us are earnest with Mr. Gladstone, most of us were not so earnest in the time of Lord Palmerston. A leading statesman may almost transform the tone of a nation. Morally and intellectually he can set the fashion for the time being. The educative function of a legislator

is not altogether exercised in this unconscious way. The leader of a party at least decides what questions shall be thrashed out, He seldom waits for a question to be thrust upon him but anticipates a little, trusting to the inevitable discussion to ripen the minds of the electorate for his measures. We need not here enter on the old weary question, whether a member of Parliament is a representative or a delegate. He is both. In some men the one character will predominate: in other men the other. Which, depends on the character of the member and of the nature of the constituency. A member may do much to educate his constituency.. The disastrous defeat of Mr.?Goschen in East Edinburgh in 1886, which so astonished the quid nuncs of the metropolis , was largely due to the effective way in which his young opponent of the previous year had educated the constituency.. If a man cannot educate a constituency without seeming to parade his superiority that simply shows that he does not know his business.

We have now at some length discussed the main points in the character of a legislator. It only remains to add that no one of them should be rigidly insisted upon. It is just possible to be too vehement in praise of moderation or too anxious to make our ideal legislator "that flawless monster whom the world ne'er saw".

Of the ideal thus sketched we might say as Carlyle said of Mirabeau "There has hitherto been none such". We are not likely to have a statesman in whom all these qualities meet to rule over us. And it is perhaps as well, for he was a very human Athenian who objected to Aristides the Just. Owing to the historical fact that in this country almost the only career for the aristocracy has been the public service, political life is so esteemed among us that we need never fear a dearth of able and honourable aspirants for office. No one of these aspirants will realise in his own person the complete ideal, but each must possess some of the characteristics noted above or he would never seek the distinctions and worries of a public life. We are practically so sure that the supply of fit aspirants will continue that the problem of inducing the best men to enter the service of the country is not so important for us as it is in the United States, where there is little tradition of public life. We need not therefore seek to drive any man into parliamentary life against the inclination by multiplying inducements, or by appealing to his patriotism and his sense of duty, or by exaggerating the dangers of being governed by worse men. The man who really needed to be induced to enter the public service could hardly fail not to be a success. Willingness

to serve the country we can afford to make an indispensable condition, and we are the better served that a man always achieves the most who follows his bent, that is, who performs his true function. In our circumstances the problem is to keep back those who seek only the social distinction which attaches to a member of Parliament.

There is no natural provision made by a democracy, or rather in a democracy - for it is an essential condition of the continued existence of a democracy,- for the continuous supply of public servants with the necessary moral and intellectual qualities A democracy cannot exist and maintain itself unless the citizens have the constitutional temper. The body of the citizens must have acquired, somehow, the habit of balancing and weighing opinions without heat. To discuss without falling to breaking heads or lapsing into the"red fool fury of the Seine" is the condition of a democracy. The Greeks had only one alternative to the status quó,- the return to anarchy: and to anarchy they periodically returned. As Plato points out, within each city there were two nations. There are so many possible forms of government in our modern politics that the dread alternative of the dissolution of social order is not within the range of practical politics. Somehow we have acquired this habit of discussion and of yielding to a

majority without an appeal to force. Every efficient member of a democratic state has thus the essential qualities of a legislator and might rise to the occasion if called upon to exercise the powers of government. Our jury system, whatever its deficiencies, is a recognition of the judicial capacity of the average man. Perhaps the political history of the United States presents the most remarkable illustration of this talent for affairs in the ordinary man. The uncontemplated result of the mechanical system of electing a President prescribed by the Constitution is, that the choice generally falls upon an obscure man. Yet such is the American talent for affairs that the man thus elected on account of his negative qualifications has never, the anomalous case of President Johnson being excepted, turned out ill, and in one case, at any rate, earned for himself a place of honour among the statesmen of the world. From our English point of view it is to the everlasting credit of the American citizens that their constitution works so well. Their fine political sense saves them from many of the perplexities in which a highly elaborated theoretical constitution might involve them. The United States is not such a political community as ours and after the Revolution heroes had passed away there was no tradition of public service to set a standard for

public life. Their politics is the triumph of the average man. This political aptitude arises from the same source as the corruption and uncertainty of their politics, viz. the exclusive devotion of the average American to business. Even so early a political thinker as Socrates recognised the aptitude of the business man for political life. The qualities necessary for success in business are those which make for success in politics . The same decisiveness, the same "animated moderation", the same habit of rapid almost intuitive survey of the whole matter in hand, the same knack of seizing the psychological moment are to be seen in both. Moreover a successful business man is not over clever, and is certainly not given to abstract impossible idealism. If such a man goes in for politics, he is not likely to be carried away with every wind of doctrine. The danger is rather that he will not be open enough to new ideas. The man whose bread is given whose water is sure is only too ready to conclude that this is the best of all possible worlds, and to treat all discontent as factious and wanton It is doubtful whether the business man in politics will be as useful in the future as he has been in the past. While legislative work was chiefly directed towards improving and amplifying the mechanism of government the training and methods of business men

were indispensable. There does not seem much more purely political reform to accomplish. Politics is becoming more than the perfecting of the social mechanism. We have got out machine, and now we are going to use it. As pioneers of democracy business men have rendered great service, but they can hardly be so useful in the future when other work is required. The business man is apt to be narrow and to legislate for one type alone forgetting that all men are not animated by that spirit of enlightenment and omniscience which presides in the City. We shall at least require more diversity of type than we have in our present legislators, because the work will be different and more personal.

Assuming that we need not trouble about the supply of aspirants for public office with a natural inclination for political life how are we best to turn them to account? A genius, it is true, will find out a way for himself but geniuses in politics are sufficiently rare. Public honours happen upon most men unprepared. They get up their political knowledge before they commence their candidature and they are generally content to take their cue from their party leaders. Their training for legislative work, though not their aptitude for it, is gained within the walls of the House, and it is generally effective enough. From such members we

expect no initiative. Their party loyalty is the currency of politics. The day of such journeymen in politics is nearly over. For the work of the future they are not suited. The ideas which will come before them will be new to them and they are not open to new ideas. The useful members of the future will be those who have deliberately adopted politics as a profession, (not necessarily to make money), and our problem is what education is best suited for them. We cannot take account of those who make their way into political life from below, because at the age when the training would be valuable we cannot tell which would come to the front. We must leave them to the tender mercies of the survival of the fittest. Before they reach high rank in the political world they will have received a practical training in the management of men which will make up for the absence of deliberate training. Moreover such men are not by nature statesmen so much as spokesmen of a class and of them we do not expect the all-round, all embracing view of the statesman. They are advocates not legislators. Their education must be left to circumstances.

The purposive education of a legislator must begin on the basis of a sound education and must not begin too early. Premature specialisation could nowhere be more pernicious in its effects

than on one who aimed to sit in judgment upon the ideas and wants of other men. It is obviously beyond the limits of the subject to determine whether the instruction provided in our public schools is the best training for public life. The relative values of the different studies pursued cannot be determined off-hand, and we can only pass judgment on the result. There is this deficiency through out the whole system, whatever good we may attribute to the incidental training of our public schools, from which we draw and for long will continue to draw those who look to political life as a profession, that even in purpose the aim is individual not national. The whole system ignores the fact that the boys will become citizens, perhaps legislators: it treats them as if they had no duties but to themselves, their own culture and their own success. The consequence is that nowhere are class prejudices so powerful as in the privileged republic of the public school boy. His contempt for every grade of society below his own is unhesitating and superb. He has no feeling of national unity any more than he has humanitarian sympathies. This contemptuous arrogant exclusiveness is the first thing that a would-be legislator has to get rid of. He must feel sympathy with all classes for our legislators cannot remain a class apart. Condescension is an attitude fatal to

successful legislation, and yet it is precisely the attitude which a public school man would naturally assume when called upon to legislate in accordance with some popular aspiration in which he does not share.

Our public school system, from the present point of view, is a false departure, but how is it to be remedied? The problem is not how to teach boys the principles of statecraft but how to inculcate the moral and intellectual qualities necessary for true statesmanship. The value of the various studies is of little or no moment to us here, except in so far as they tend to foster the social and the national ideal in the boys. How this may be done is a question which requires more serious consideration than it has received. We are content to let a boy pick up his consciousness of a national ideal and overcome his class exclusiveness anyhow, and if interrogated would feel inclined to say with Protagoras in reply to Socrates that mixing among men is the best education in public virtue. But modern England is not ancient Athens. The young Athenian could not miss the inspiration of his city's history. The glories of the Persian war were kept before his mind and the love of Athens was taught by every speaker in the assembly and every poet in the theatre. The public service was almost an act of

worship, for was not Athens the City of Athene. Their statesmen did not hesitate to appeal to the patriotism of their hearers and not in vain. How the hearts of the young Athenians must have burned within them as they listened to the words of Pericles, to which even we at this day can respond! But we have no national ideal. As a nation we have lost all our enthusiasms and illusions. Other nations have something to aspire to, something to believe in. We do not even believe in ourselves. We are ashamed to do good and when we happen to accomplish some notable act of international justice or chivalry, we carefully explain it as prompted by self-interest and we hardly feel irritated when foreign nations take us at our own estimate. The opprobrium which rightly fell on a tinsel imperialism has also fallen upon worthier sentiments, and to-day from fear of the sting of cheap epigrams, patriotism has gone out of fashion. We would shrug our shoulders, though perhaps with a secret sympathy, if we should hear any one exclaim,-

"Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?:- say."

We cannot acquiesce in this dreary state of affairs, unless we can submit to disappear from the stage of history. A nation which refuses to take itself seriously is damned already. Yet a national ideal cannot be created in a day as the Americans

strive to create it, by an appeal to history. Only Baron Munchausen can lift himself out of the mire by tugging at the hair on his own head. A national ideal must be something in the future, something to which we can conceive ourselves working. And we have no such national ideal. If we turn to the leaders of our national life in politics or in literature, they are dumb. We have, indeed, spasmodic attempts to create a belief in the future of the English speaking race but these all bear the taint of artificiality because they are all self-conscious attempts to remedy the defect. They do not proceed from the heart of the nation, and seem to be imposed on us from the outside: and hence the apparent futility of these attempts. There is a national deficiency in imagination and on this account these attempts can only appeal to a section of the nation; but we cannot create a living conception of the national ideal within a section of the nation only. It is important that our legislators should be conscious of the national ideal but our legislators are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and ought only to be animated, though more consciously, by the ideas which animate the body of the citizens. To teach patriotic and national sentiment in our secondary schools, and neglect the great mass of the children in our primary schools would create a division within

the state, and perpetuate class prejudices. It could be productive of little good. The creation of a national ideal must come by way of a national education. There is no other way open to us. The Press has done much and may do more to develope the sense of national unity and to destroy the barriers of class by letting the one half know how the other half lives: but education is not the main function of the Press. A journalist is the eye of the public not the brain nor the conscience. Nor can we depend on great teachers to spread this national consciousness for the supply of prophets is somewhat precarious. Moreover, they influence only a section of the nation and the ideal is national not sectional. "For "cities cannot exist if a few only share in the virtues as in the "arts", Prot.322.

The only course open for us is a revised system of national education. Our present elementary system is fairly well adapted to the individual needs of the children of the lower middle class, but it produces neither workmen nor citizens. There is a consciousness of the former defect, and a remedy will be found, but so far as I can discover there is a profound indifference to the latter and more serious defect. It is matter of surprise that the Government supporters of the Free Education Bill,

when twitted with their change of front, did not reply that circumstances alter cases and that Free Education is the logical outcome of the extension of the Franchise in 1885. Yet it was the argument which lay to their hand, although it would have been a dangerous weapon for the supporters of Voluntary Schools to use. Now that every man has a vote the state has an interest in every child. The State ought, therefore, to have control over the education of every child. The natural corollary is that there should be no voluntary schools: that all children should pass through the same training. This is undoubtedly an encroachment upon the rights of the parent. In the name of freedom we remove a child out of reach of national influence and hand him over to the arbitrary rule and guidance of one sole individual,- his father: in the name of the child and of the State we must protest against this invasion of the liberty of the child. No man ought to have the power to bring upon his children any unnecessary stigma of extreme and despised opinions. Children dread being odd, and many of them in later life find themselves handicapped because they have not lived in the body of ordinary opinion. We do not seek to withdraw a child entirely from the influence of his father, whatever his opinions - that would be impossible - but merely to give each child an opportunity

in later life of correcting his father's standpoint if need be. The tender mind of a child is no fit field for the zeal of a proselytiser. The re-action of son against father, which prevents one good custom from corrupting the world, seldom occurs when the struggle for existence occupies all the energies. The opinions, false or true, impressed upon the mind of a child by its father at an age when examination is impossible are seldom changed in after life. Therefore it is all the more important that every child should receive a national education to correct the one-sidedness of his home training. We can thus supply a child with the means of tacitly criticising, by each other in later years, the diverse doctrines and opinions he has had impressed upon him. What we seek is freedom for the State to communicate its programme, the freedom which we grant and will continue to grant to every organisation. Only the State has first claim. No terms of reprobation could be too strong to stigmatise the man, who teaches or causes or allows his children to be taught doctrines which create a schism in the body politic. We must rescue the children alike from the High Church rector who teaches that dissent is a sin and from the pettiness and rancour of Dissent itself.

It is perhaps too much to hope that we can have any system

of national education set up, where the children of the poor and the rich may sit side by side and learn the same lessons from the same books, learning at the same time the spirit of brotherliness and sympathy. It is, alas! too ideal, although the old parochial system of Scotland realised it in part. There is something which parents naturally value above the qualities of citizenship and that is, good manners. This, and not snobbishness, is often the real reason why indifferent private schools, where only accomplishments are taught and these badly, manage to maintain their ground. Parents of the middle classes gladly pay, and under any system of merely free education will continue to pay, to prevent their children from learning, not evil habits - one class is as another in that respect - but coarse manners. Until the great day that is coming comes when the moral qualities which constitute citizenship will be preferred to the barren graces of a sectional code of etiquette, a national system of education must remain a beautiful dream.

Yet it is something worth working to and the idea should be kept in mind during the inevitable reconstruction of our educational system in the not very distant future. Every step towards its realisation will make possible the next step. We have added a

new nation to our Electorate, but they still remain a class apart. They have little imaginative sympathy with a past in which they have no share and they have no conception that there are other perhaps worthier ends to be sought than the satisfaction of their material wants.

> The ploughman will despise and scoff
> That work he is not skilful of.

Moral unity is far more important that material unity and without a system of national education moral unity is impossible. If we had taken the problem of the Essay in a wider sense a scheme of national education would have supplied the solution. The close attention with which Electors follow the proceedings of Parliament would justify us in saying that the electors are the legislators. On this interpretation the problem of national education assumes even more importance. Not only must the members realise the moral unity of the nation but the new electorate must also realise it. In their hands is the power and we should see to it that they have a sense of the responsibility of power. We must educate our masters. This is not the place, had I the power, to determine the details of a national education. We seem to move in a circle. We need a national education to develope a national ideal and a

national education is the teaching of the national ideal. Theoretical dilemmas are easily overcome. Perhaps the first step would be to rescue the training of the teachers from the hands of denominational colleges. What we must insist upon here is, that no attempt to create a national conscience and a national ideal can be anything but a failure, which does not begin in our schools. We cannot expect a real sense of national unity to obliterate our class distinctions if we continue to grave these distinctions deeply on the minds of our children. The result of our present system is the creation of moral castes.

Meantime, except under rarely favouring circumstances, our coming legislators grow up in an atmosphere of class prejudices and exclusiveness. As we have already noted this is a frame of mind to be got rid of before any useful work can be accomplished. A sense of the solidarity of all classes, a recognition of the unity of human brotherhood, and of national tradition underlying the differences of social position, a broad human sympathy with everything human, these are the qualities which a legislator is left to attain for himself. School does little for him and university does less, but these qualities are essential. He might do without technical training, but he cannot do without these. But there is no reason why he should do without either. They are not incompati-

ble in the finished statesman, as we can see by looking around us.

The protest which Lord Bacon made against the "dedicating "of colleges and societies only to the use of professory learning". "....to the prejudice of states and governments" effected nothing. The purposive education of a legislator must still be self education. Our universities have done nothing, perhaps could do nothing. It is said that Dugald Stewart drew around him a circle of young men who sought a parliamentary career and sought to remedy the deficiencies of a university course by directing their reading, and I know that it was the hope of one of the Edinburgh Professors that the Commission would render it possible to revive this informal political seminar. There is a sufficiency of material provided in the shape of lectures and classes for any course of training which the aspirant might elect to follow. In all our universities there are classes of history and political economy, and in the near future we may hope for lectureships in political science: and there is a law faculty. The value of these courses of study as a training for a political career may easily be over-rated. The main advantage of the study of history is to prevent one from being taken in by historical analogies. In the guidance of a nation the warnings of history are of little use. History never repeats

itself and to act on an apparent analogy might be disastrous. A knowledge of particular epochs, especially of times of change and revolution, would be valuable because at these times the forces, which are always at work, may be more easily studied. A summary history is of value only to the man who does not need a summary. That a history should be "a possession for all time" it must be more than a mere record of events: it must contain an analysis of the motives and forces which shape the course of a nation's history A politician has to live largely from hand to mouth and must constantly "jump" the future. Perhaps the abiding result of the study of the political history of nations is growth of a spirit of fatalism. "for experience teaches us a great variety of things: and "amongst them, nothing more surprising than that whole nations "lived either in absolute blindness or in purblind indifference to "what we can well enough see were the causes of their decay or "destruction",- Anti-Jacobin Dec.26.'91. It was Pericles the ideal statesman, whose policy brought Athens to her ruin. The advantages of the study of economics and political science, are sufficiently obvious, but unless we constantly remember that the results of these sciences form part only of the material with which a legislator has to work the risks are as great as the advantages.

From the study of law he may learn the physiology of legislation and acquire the ability of reducing sentiment to form.

After all, however, the real advantages of the academic training have been acquired only when its limitations are felt. A scholar need never feel the limitations of an academic training, but a scholar in politics is a sight for gods and men. Aristotle considered that politics was not a study for young men, because they have not the experience on which to base a theory and by which to criticise and verify the theories, they may have adopted on authority. Perhaps we may say that for this very reason young men ought to enter in political life that they may gain experience. By contact with life and reality a consciousness of the difference between theories derived from books and actual facts is forced upon the mind. When the limitations of academic theorising are thus experienced the full benefit of the academic training has been gathered and the political student is ready for the next stage of his training.

To the Lehrjahre must succeed the Wanderjahre, not merely to acquire command over foreign languages but rather to give meaning to the studies of comparative politics already undertaken. A mere tourist visit will not suffice. It is said to take a colonial two or three years earnest study before he can appreciate "PUNCH",

and colonials, probably, know more of the details of our politics than we do of theirs. One of our own colonies will serve as well as a foreign nation and the same detailed critical attitude can be acquired within less time. One of my class-mates for several years, a Canadian, enforced the value of this training upon me, He knew Canadian politics practically and theoretically before he came to continue his studies in Edinburgh, and during the three or four years of his stay here, he became more intimately acquainted with the workings of our constitution and with the characters of our politicians than any home student I knew. He was able, moreover, to take a detached view of our problems and of the problems of his native Canada comparing them and criticising them the one by the other. If the coming legislator can during his Wanderjahre make himself an authority on some knotty problem of home or foreign politics so much the more speedy will be his rise to fame and opportunity.

During his wanderjahre however it is spent the aspirant will, if he is wise, (and on paper he ought to be wise) lay the foundations of that knowledge of men and motives which he must acquire if he is to have any influence on politics. For there is a great gulf fixed between a laudable interest in political affairs and actual political achievement. Unharnessed zeal accomplishes

nothing. The difference between the theory and practice of politics is well brought out in an anonymous extract given in an open letter in the CENTURY Magazine, Jan.1885. "The scholar studies a German "authority on the Constitution, and some books on comparative pol- "itics and goes out into the world with a notion that he is a re- "presentative figure of the scholar in politisc, and wonders that "the people do not recognize him and send him at once to Congress. "The scholar should cultivate the simple ways by which he may in- "fluence his own neighbourhood. The first thing for a scholar is "to learn his duties to his own neighbours before he can enter into "the political life of the people. .... To be good for anything in "the public service, a young man needs to have some sense and "experience, as well as money and education..... Too often the "young man is a student of politics,- not a politician".

While agreeing with the spirit of this quotation we must admit that, in our own country, where there is such a thing as a foreign policy, there is an alternative course, by which a young man, his Lehrjahre and his Wanderjahre both passed, may seek to enter the field of national politics for which he has trained himself.

The legislator in training may (how?is not our business)

become private Secretary to some Minister and thus acquire that practical knowledge of affairs in which his theoretical study has left him deficient. The value of the training he will thus receive is recognized even by the outside public. In an election in Scotland (I cannot trace which) it was urged to rebut the charge of youth, made against Mr.Munro Ferguson, that he was private Secretary to Lord Rosebery, and would receive in this capacity an insight into practical affairs, which, half a century of parliamentary experience would not afford. He will gain as Private Secretary knowledge of men, knowledge of business forms, tact and management, and, if he be wise, the habit of making other people work for him. Under the pressure of modern political life no man can bear up who has not learned the art of devolution, and, since all statesmen are not greedy of detail, like Lord Salisbury or Lord Hartington that was, the art of devolution may be best learned from one who has risen to high position. If the young man have any moral fibre, the experience as irresponsible Secretary to a responsible Minister will brace his nature. The great advantage of this method of seeking to enter public life is that he has opportunity. A Minister prefers that his Secretary should be also in the House, and always at hand, and thus a young man will have his merits early recognized.

by those in authority. The danger is that he will fall into the practical fallacy of dissillusion, and take himself too seriously, and his work not seriously enough.

This is the older and easier method of deliberately entering into politics, butit is hardly as thorough, nor, considering that the legislative work of the future will be largely social, so practical as the other course indicated in the paragraph quoted above.

Before seeking to enter the larger arena of national politics a young man ought to seek a training in the lesser assemblies and councils of the Country. The rough and ready methods of local politics will serve to disabuse him of any fine ideas he may have held on the power of pure thought to influence men. In his contact with men, and this is the sum of local politics, he will lose the idealism which renders many men impossible in politics, and he will cease to imagine that nobility of principle is a sufficient stock in trade for a politician. The <u>profanum vulgus</u> know little about abstract principles and care less, but they know the men they can trust. In local politics a young man will learn the virtue of organisation because he will soon become aware that the success of his principles depends mainly on his success in persuad-

ing and managing men. The real danger of parochialism will not come nigh him who regards local politics as only a training ground for the larger arena. Unlike the private secretary his experience will not tend to make him take himself too seriously. An experience of Ward Meetings and Local Committees does not make a man think more highly of himself than he ought.

With respect to the formal training which they afford there is little to choose between the alternatives, but, when we regard the work a legislator has to do the superiority manifestly lies with the latter alternative. A private secretary may readily come to regard every new idea as an insult and every enthusiast as a bore; but the other is in constant contact with the men in accordance with whose ideas he may afterwards have to legislate. A statesman does not evolve legislation from his inner consciousness and if he is not to yield to every manufactured agitation he must understand the men with whose ideas he has to deal. A private secretary may be able to pierce a windy enthusiasm or to discern the unreality of some loud demand but in his cleverness he will be liable to condemn the good with the bad. He lies under the serious disability of looking at social movements mainly from the outside and he cannot always read the signs of the times aright. To discern the true inwardness of a popular demand a man must have lived long

and intimately among the class from which it comes. He must frequent assemblies of the people and mix with them on equal terms. The Trade Congress, Rural Conferences, the lecturers in the parks and at the street corners will teach him what he can learn from no text book. He will be able at once to distinguish between a worked up cry and a genuine popular movement. The legislator of the future must go out among the people, must in short be the visible embodiment of the sentiment of brotherhood and national unity. If he understands his object in thus mixing among men wherever ideas are exchanged or propounded, there is no reason to fear that he will be disillusioned. His sense of the possible will prevent him from being carried away in the trust of a new idea. He will always maintain his balance and, leaving it to other men to explain and compare his actions, he will never seek to formulate himself. He will, as a legislator, do what the occasion demands after he has clearly ascertained what the occasion does demand.

All this training requires time and the man who seeks it cannot hope to enter Parliament in the spring of his youth. But in Parliament there is no urgent demand for young men. Parliament should receive its initiative from the outside and the absence of youthful initiative within its own body is not so much to be regretted. With the extension of local government, Parliament will

come to represent the associative principle in the State and every Member will then be made to realise that he is first of all a Member for the whole country. Plato's rulers did not enter on their duties till they were tested by many years of practical activity and since, to use the metaphor once more, the work of a statesman is the work of Platonic Justice in the human soul, the harmonious functioning of the whole, we may agree with him who saw all things well that it is better that a legislator should not be young.